

Bonner House

Dudley Lodge

Bonner House, 172 Sellywood Road, Birmingham B30 1TJ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

This centre is registered to provide placements for 10 families. The service is provided by a non-profit making charitable organisation. The range of facilities have been developed to support one family unit, which includes a parent or parents who may have a physical disability. In addition to residential assessment placements, this service facilitates day assessments and community-based assessments.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 July 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents, taking into account **good**

How well children and parents are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The residential family centre provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 19 September 2014

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This residential family centre is good because:

- Families are able to receive their parenting assessments in well-maintained flats. Parents and children benefit from facilities that include a colourful playroom and safe outdoor playground.
- Highly skilled, qualified and experienced staff provide families with support and guidance during their assessments.
- Families have access to healthcare and leisure activities that promote their good health and well-being.
- Staff capture the parent's progress in records to reflect the parent's ability to care for their children in a safe manner.
- Staff are passionate about their work with families.
- Staff ensure that families receive lots of help with benefits and housing issues, which means that families are able to focus more on their assessments rather than worrying about money and housing matters.
- Staff ensure that final assessment reports are clear and well written, so that courts are well informed about the parent's strengths, areas for development, their capacity to change and their ability to keep their child safe.
- Many parents form positive relationships with staff and recognise the difference the staff have made in enabling them to understand their child's needs and to develop their parenting skills.
- Life story work is child centred and offers parents and children with milestone memories.
- Parents engage very well with the psychologist service. This helps them to get the support that they need to overcome past difficulties.
- Staff establish strong networks and work closely in partnership with professionals to identify and meet the needs of families.
- Feedback from a wide range of professionals is extremely positive.
- The registered manager has a good insight into the strengths and areas for development of the service. She reviews the service and makes comprehensive plans for improvements that will drive up standards further.

The residential family centre's areas for development:

- Recording relating to care plans, medicines, complaints and staff recruitment all require improvement.
- Although parents' engagement in practice is well established, this is not translated into daily and weekly records and care plans.
- The deployment of staff does not reflect the changing needs of families and means pre-programmed activities are often cancelled.
- The centre's register is missing some family information.

What does the residential family centre need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Residential Family Centre Regulations 2002 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person shall ensure that any offer of employment to a person is subject to full and satisfactory information being available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2, and that no person starts work at the residential family centre until such time as this has been complied with. (Regulation 16(3)(d)(4)(a)(b))	31/08/2017
The registered person shall maintain in respect of each family accommodated in the residential family centre a record which includes the information, documents and other records specified in Schedule 3 relating to the member of the family and is kept up date. (Regulation 19(1)(a)(b))	31/08/2017
The registered person shall maintain the records specified in Schedule 4 in respect of the residential family centre and ensure that they are kept up to date. (Regulation 19(3)(4)(a))	31/08/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that parents are engaged in the assessment process and provided with regular feedback and that this engagement is reflected in the written assessment. (NMS 1.8)
- Ensure that parents' and children's physical, emotional and social development needs are identified on their family placement plan and promoted throughout their placement. (NMS 6.1)
- Ensure that there is an effective policy on the safe management of medicines which includes a written record of all medication, treatment and first aid given to parents and children during their placement. All staff and parents are to be made aware of the policy. (NMS 6.6)
- Ensure that staff complete a written family placement plan, in consultation with the placing authority, and agreed, so far as may be practicable, with the parent(s) and, if age-appropriate, the child. The plan should specify the objectives and

intended outcomes of the placement, details of training, assistance, assessment, supervision and protection to be provided at the centre, and how the child's welfare will be promoted. (NMS 9.2)

- Ensure that the overall number, competence and deployment of staff, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, can fulfil the centre's statement of purpose and meet the individual needs of all the parents and children resident at the centre. (NMS 15.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: good

Families receive guidance and support from staff who are committed to helping parents to make meaningful progress to overcome past difficulties that have influenced their ability to care for their children and keep them safe. Parents are afforded an array of opportunities to develop self-esteem, confidence and to build up parenting skills that improve their abilities to meet the health, safety and welfare needs of their children.

Parents understand what is expected of them during their assessment. Parents' different needs are taken into account in the design of information provided about the centre and the assessment process. For example, staff will use pictorial support and plain English to help parents that have a learning disability to understand the different aspects of their assessment. Staff take into account the religious, racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and any special needs, such as mental health needs, of parents and children, and know how to seek advice or assistance to allow any needs arising from these to be met. The range of sessions and support offered to parents is excellent, particularly the help parents receive with benefits, housing, employment and education. Staff complete risk-related work with parents. These detailed sessions help parents to have a better understanding of how their past experiences can influence their child's safety.

The relationships between staff, parents and children are mutually respectful and enable parents and their children to feel safe and secure throughout the assessment process. Engagement with parents and children is central to this, although the level of participation is variable, especially in parents being afforded opportunities to personally add their comments and opinions in records and reports throughout their assessment.

Families' complaints are treated fairly and outcomes of complaints are shared with parents. However, parents are sometimes fearful of raising a complaint because they worry this might have a negative impact on their assessments.

Staff follow the framework for assessment and, when necessary, PAMS to ensure that the different assessment needs of families are appropriately met. Staff have an in-depth understanding of child development, the families' backgrounds and issues, including domestic abuse and learning disabilities. The assessment process addresses all areas of risk to children, the parents' capacity to change and to understand and meet their child's needs. One parent told the inspectors, 'The staff are all very good and deserve a pay rise. I have reached my targets with help from staff.'

Feedback from professionals is very positive. The social worker for one family commented that the quality of assessments is very good and that, 'Staff analyse the information thoroughly to give a clear picture and indication of what life is like for the children. Communication is very good between myself and the centre.'

Ethnicity, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity is recognised, valued and

promoted through all functions of the centre and is a positive feature throughout parents' assessments.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: good

Highly trained staff work closely with multi-agency partnerships to ensure that child protection is at the heart of the assessment process. All processes for reporting and responding to both child and adult protection concerns are fully in keeping with local safeguarding procedures. Staff ensure that the stimulating environment is safe and secure, enabling parents to safely care for their children during the comprehensive assessment. Parents confirm that they feel safe at the centre and feel that staff showed genuine concern for their welfare.

All risks that are known on admission and any that may subsequently be identified during the assessment are reflected in the final report findings. Some excellent sessions are completed to enable parents to reflect on historical risks. This enables the parent to self-evaluate the impact that past risks can have on their ability to safeguard their child. Sessions on risk are central to the assessment process and support that staff provide for parents.

Families are informed about the set expectations of behaviour, and staff are trained and skilful in de-escalation techniques to enable them to manage conflict safely.

Vigilant staff respond quickly and effectively to any incidents involving behaviour by adults that could pose a risk to children and families and to any child protection concerns. When children become unwell, staff are proactive in seeking medical advice and, if appropriate, supporting parents to take children to hospital. Immediate liaison with placing authorities ensures a multi-agency approach to the situation and, if necessary (in order to protect families), parents being asked to leave or an assessment being terminated. A social worker confirmed, 'The key worker keeps me updated and shares her concerns.'

Managers fail to ensure that internal monitoring of recruitment creates a high threshold to deter abusers gaining access to children and to protect vulnerable adults. Shortfalls extend to managers not always noticing missing information. For example, enquiries as to why a person's employment ended when they have worked with children or vulnerable adults are not always followed up. In addition, photo identification and copies of qualifications are not always sought.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers ensure that families are afforded a good balance of experienced staff. Individual members of staff hold a wide range of professional qualifications that enable them to undertake comprehensive assessments. The qualifications across the staff team provide a wealth of expertise. Staff are highly qualified, with most staff holding degrees, including degrees in social work. Managers ensure that there are continuous training opportunities for staff and that they are fully supported to make use of these opportunities in their work with families.

Managers ensure that staff are supported, supervised and accountable in their work with families. Staff supervision is of a very high quality with a strong emphasis on reflective practice. This regular appraisal of staff performance is used to give managers good insight into the skills and competence of the workforce.

There are considerable strengths in the team. Professional feedback is outstanding and demonstrates that courts and professionals hold the centre in high regard for the quality of the assessments and the professionalism of staff, especially when presenting evidence at court. A children's guardian said that judges have commended the written evidence that staff produced. One judge commented that one report was the best that they had seen.

The registered manager's self-evaluation of the quality of the service is detailed. It provides reliable evidence of the positive difference that the centre makes to families' lives. The registered manager demonstrates that she evaluates progress made by parents and children and that she has a wealth of knowledge about assessments. However, the level of consultation with individual parents is not always evidenced in weekly targets. For example, weekly targets relating to families do not show specific comments made by parents. This creates a missed opportunity to demonstrate the level of participation parents have in their progress throughout their assessments.

Staff rotas indicate that there are sufficient staff on duty to meet the needs of families at all times. However, the views of staff and parents are that sometimes there are not enough staff to undertake work in addition to assessments, such as timetabled group sessions. Problems emerge with staffing when families have setbacks or last-minute appointments and staff need to respond to the changing needs of families. The service manager confirmed that work is ongoing regarding staff deployment to improve the situation.

Records lack direct testimonies from parents to inform their assessment. Parents confirm that staff do work collaboratively with them. However, the family care planning does not support this. For example, care plans fail to show the families' journey and their contribution to all achievements. The recording of medications and complaints are other areas for improvement. Lastly, the centre's family register is missing pieces of information, such as parents' previous addresses and their marital status. Weaknesses in records detract from the many outstanding features of practice by the managers and staff.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and parents. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and parents. They watched how professional staff work with children and parents and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and parents. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the residential family centre knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and parents who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Residential Family Centre Regulations 2002 and the national minimum standards.

Residential family centre details

Unique reference number: SC412598

Registered provider: Dudley Lodge

Registered provider address: Dudley Lodge Family Assessment Centre, 143
Warwick Road, Coventry CV3 6AT

Responsible individual: James Evans

Registered manager: Rachael White

Mandy Clynick

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Inspectors

Mrs Louise Whittle, social care inspector

Mrs Michelle Moss, social care regulatory manager



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